

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-3

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U.S. Tightens Screening Of Its Workers' Writings

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The Justice Department yesterday issued new regulations requiring government employees with high-level security clearances to submit for government approval any speech or other written material that contains classified information or concerns intelligence activities or methods.

The regulations would apply not only to books, speeches and lectures, but also to articles, pamphlets, book reviews and even fictional works and letters to the editor. They would require government employees to sign pledges promising to submit for approval all written material about classified and non-classified intelligence matters if the information was obtained during government employment.

The regulations follow an executive order issued last March by President Reagan extending the government's authority to review and screen information published by present or former government employees.

That executive order also contained provisions requiring federal employees to promise not to reveal classified information and to take lie detector tests in investigations of leaks.

Before the Reagan administration took office, only employees at extremely sensitive agencies such as the CIA, the National Security Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency were required to submit materials for approval before publication.

The new regulations replace a narrower set of regulations issued by the administration in 1981 extending the pre-publication clearance requirement to Cabinet officers and other senior officials who had access to high-level classified material.

Last March, administration offi-

cials said that the Justice Department was taking the position, based on the 1980 Supreme Court decision in the case of former CIA employee Frank Snepp, that all government employees with access to classified information have an obligation not to disclose it in books or articles, regardless of whether they have signed a formal agreement.

Snepp was required by the court to forfeit profits on his book because he had not complied with a signed agreement that required him to submit it for CIA review before publication.

Under the new regulations, employees with access to classified information must sign an agreement that they will allow the government to claim all royalties from any publication that violates the pre-publication review requirement.

The regulations cover both employees with regular security clearances and those with especially sensitive clearances—called Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) clearances. A Justice Department official said yesterday that he did not know how many employees would be required to sign the new pledges.

While many federal employees hold clearances, he said, there are relatively few with SCI clearances—about 2,000 at the FBI and 500 in the remainder of the Justice Department. He did not have figures for other agencies.

Employees with SCI clearances must submit for review any material containing classified information. In addition, they must submit any material containing "information concerning intelligence activities, sources or methods," even if it is not classified.

Under the new rules, those employees would not even be able to discuss the information with a publisher or a lawyer without authorization from the government.